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HB 21 HD 1 RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

Statement for
House Committee on
Finance
Public Hearing - February 22, 1989

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HB 21 HD 1 recognizes the potential contamination of nearshore waters posed by nonpoint source pollutants from pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers used on adjacent lands and notes in particular the real and legitimate concerns for the potential contamination of marine life used for human consumption.

Our statement on this bill does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

While we fully concur with the intent of HB 21 HD 1 and share the concerns expressed in the Standing Committee Report 58, we remain concerned that the study as proposed is not likely to be adequate to conclusively demonstrate either the safety or non-safety of the biota tested. In this regard, we are concerned that the results of this study may lead to inappropriate subsequent action. For example either a false sense of security for consuming coastal marine fauna subject to non-point source pollutants or conversely unduly and incorrectly alarm the public as to the non-safety of the local marine flora or fauna.

As presently drafted the scope of the study is directed at Opihi and limu. However, the Committee Report cites a concern for bioaccumulation. Bioaccumulation is most readily observed as one goes up the food chain so ideally the initial studies should include an organism that is higher in

the chain. Limu as a marine algae is at the bottom of the food chain. Opihi, that feed on algae, are only one step up. One might expect greater potential for bioaccumulation if fish that feed on crustacea that in turn feed on algae were the selected organisms for study.

The influence or effects of fertilizers on limu and opihi are not likely to be measureable. If the study is to proceed, we suggest that it be focused on herbicides and pesticides in marine fauna. As mentioned in an earlier testimony on HB 21, pesticide/herbicide analyses are very costly hence the study will be significantly limited unless greater funding than the proposed \$25,000 is provided.